Mitchell Doesn't Want '72 Task, Aide Says

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By Isabelle Hall
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Deputy Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst said this week Attorney General John N. Mitchell, architect of President Nixon's 1968 election victory, does not want to run his 1972 campaign for re-election.

"We're very, very close," Kleindienst said of Mitchell. "I see him twice a day.

"Of course, John Mitchell would do anything the President asked. If the President asked him to run the campaign, John Mitchell would. I think the President is going to get re-elected, but it won't be so easy by any means."

Kleindienst said one of the obstacles to an easy second term is the President's credibility gap with the young, which he says Mr. Nixon inherited from Lyndon B. Johnson.

Kleindienst, who has visited several college campuses as part of a Justice Department campaign to improve its communication with students, said: "They don't believe us. They believe as they were taught to believe about Johnson — that Nixon wants to be on a big white horse like Caesar in the Vietnam war. They don't believe we believe in free speech and the right of dissent.

"Their disbelief in our credulity stems from the environment that's existed on college campuses for many years. Johnson's political handling of the war and the draft inequities had a traumatic effect on these kids. The lack of credulity has been transferred to Nixon."

[Kleindienst said the President is making headway with young people by winding down the war in Indochina, making the draft more equitable and backing such youth-oriented issues as cleaning up the environment.

["But most importantly," Kleindienst said, "He is telling the truth and that will be recognized." He added that he did not mean to imply that all students disbelieve the administration, nor did he link campus disaffection with the outcome of the 1972 election.]

Kleindienst served as national director of field operations for Mr. Nixon in 1968 and Barry M. Goldwater in 1964 and he shares the attorney general's reluctance about going back on the campaign trail.

"I'd do anything the President wanted, but I really wouldn't want to do that again." He said campaigning required being away from home and "you eat too much. I gained 20 pounds the last time."

See MITCHELL, G5, Col. 1

MITCHELL, From G1

Turning to criticism of the way the Republicans handled the recent elections—some of it from ousted Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel—Kleindienst said the only reason it promoted criticism "is because it was so successful.

"I was one of those in the administration — when my opinion was sought—that recommended the President become directly involved in the senatorial elections. His vital programs were having tough enough sledding. I would recommend the same approach in 1972."

Kleindienst, who has been rumored a possible Mitchell successor if the Attorney General runs Nixon's 1972 campaign, says, "I would be one of those considered, among others, for Attorney General."

But Kleindienst, 47, a native of Winslow, Ariz., who practiced law in Phoenix, said he would be "happy to go back to the provinces," if he lost out on the No. 1 job, so the new Attorney General could pick his own deputy.

RICHARD KLEINDIENST
. . cites credibility problem